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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO PRIORITY

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TAGS: [AORC](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [SZ](#) [NO](#) [MA](#)
SUBJECT: URGING EARLY RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE IN
MADAGASCAR

REF: ANTANANARIVO 258

Classified By: AF A/S Phil Carter, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. This is an action request. Please see paragraph 2.

OBJECTIVES

12. Department requests embassies in European Union (EU) member states, Oslo and Bern to demarche host governments at the highest appropriate level prior to the launch of the EU,s "political dialogue8 with the Andry Rajoelina coup regime in Madagascar on April 16 to pursue the following objectives:

Support for the African Union

-- Express appreciation for the EU,s strong statements against the illegal transfer of power in Madagascar.

-- Note USG support for the African Union,s (AU) statements on this matter, including its suspension of Madagascar for an initial six month period, its call for early elections, its intention to form an International Contact Group to coordinate international community action to ensure a return to constitutional rule, and its rejection of the Rajoelina regime,s proposed October 2010 election timetable.

-- Urge the EU to press for new elections in Madagascar as soon as possible, preferably before the end of 2009.

-- Note that the U.S. strongly supports the AU,s efforts to restore constitutional rule on Madagascar and urge the EU to coordinate its efforts with the AU. The AU has demonstrated leadership and courage in opposing coups. We must support the AU, not undercut it.

Suspend Assistance to the Government

-- Emphasize that the USG considers the recent series of events in Madagascar a military coup and as a result is required by U.S. law to suspend all assistance programs that directly benefit the Government of Madagascar (GOM) until a democratically-elected government is in place.

-- Urge the governments of the EU to avoid any actions or programs that would have the effect of legitimizing the Rajoelina regime, including through assistance programs, including budget support. Without coordinated international pressure, the Rajoelina regime is unlikely to move quickly to restore democracy

-- Share our hope that Madagascar will soon return to democratic legitimacy and be able to continue its important development activities with international community participation.

-- Underscore that the global economic crisis is likely to lead to greater social unrest and political instability in Africa. In this environment, it is especially important that coup plotters be deterred by strong and united international action to condemn and punish regimes created by coups.

Failure to take firm, consistent and decisive action endangers stability and democracy across the continent.

BACKGROUND

¶3. (SBU) After several months of opposition protests, failed negotiations, and mutiny by the military, democratically-elected President Ravalomanana issued a decree March 17 that unconstitutionally passed his powers to the highest-ranking military officers. These officers were in turn forced by mutinous lower-ranking military officials to transfer power to former Mayor Andry Rajoelina via another unconstitutional decree.

¶4. (SBU) Rajoelina has declared himself &President of the High Transition Authority,⁸ named a cabinet, disbanded the National Assembly and the Senate, and pledged to hold presidential elections in October 2010, following a constitutional referendum and revision of the electoral code. The AU has called for elections within six months, suspended Madagascar from the organization and warned the AU may impose sanctions if constitutional order is not quickly restored. SADC has condemned the coup and has not recognized Rajoelina,s government.

¶5. (U) The Department has determined that the recent change of government in Madagascar amounts to a military coup and therefore triggers the foreign assistance provisions of section 7008 of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2009. Under Section 7008, we are legally required to suspend any aid programs that finance directly any assistance to the GOM.

¶6. (SBU) Although many other donors in Madagascar are still deliberating on the future of their assistance programs, several have moved to suspend support to the GOM. The notable exception is France, which intends to continue all functioning pre-coup programs without interruption; with France leading the upcoming EU &political dialogue⁸ launching April 16 with the Rajoelina regime, the EU will likely be under pressure to follow the French lead (ref.)

¶7. (C) We understand the French are trying to include the Swiss and Norwegians in the EU "political dialogue⁸ but the Norwegians have some real hesitation about being dragged along by the French.

¶8. (U) The Department greatly appreciates assistance and engagement from posts on this issue. Please report results of the effort via front-channel cable AF/E, no later than OOB EDT Wednesday, April 15.

¶9. (U) Please contact AF/E Maria Beyzerov at (202) 647-6453 or via email for any additional information required to meet our objectives.

CLINTON